

Message Text

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51

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 AID-20 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11

FRB-02 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 TRSE-00 XMB-07 OPIC-12

SPC-03 CIEP-02 LAB-06 SIL-01 OMB-01 CEA-02 STR-08

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 L-03 NSC-10 PA-04 PRS-01 SS-20

USIA-15 DRC-01 /185 W

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R 041240ZZ JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4840

INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

AMEMBASSY LIMA

USMISSION GENEVA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRD, AR, LAFTA

SUBJ: PERON STATEMENT ON LATIN AMERICAN INTEGRATION AND TRADE

1. IN THE COURSE OF HIS NEW YEAR'S PRESS CONFERENCE ON JAN 1, PRESIDENT PERON WAS ASKED WHETHER HE FORESAW AN INCREASE IN TRADE WITH OTHER LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES DURING 1974. IN HIS REPLY PERON SAID HIS GOVERNMENT WAS INITIATING A POLICY DIRECTED TOWARDS CREATING A LATIN AMERICAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY. HE SAID THAT MANY OF THE FORMAL ORGANIZATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN ATTEMPTED IN LATIN AMERICA HAVE NOT TURNED OUT WELL BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT FOUNDED ON RATIONAL BASES. HE SAID IT IS NECESSARY TO BEGIN BY UNIFYING THE PERMANENT INTERESTS OF THE LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES, PRINCIPALLY BY SEEKING ECONOMIC COMPLEMENTATION. HE GAVE AS AN EXAMPLE THE ECONOMIC COMPLEMENTATION THAT ARGENTINA HAS SOUGHT TO ACHIEVE WITH CHILE OVER THE LAST TWO DECADES. HE DESCRIBED CREATING AN ORGANIZATION (SUCH AS LAFTA) BEFORE

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SEEKING TO CREATE COMMON ECONOMIC INTERESTS WAS "PUTTING THE CART BEFORE THE HORSE". HE SAID THAT AFTER CREATING ECONOMIC COMPLEMENTATION IT WOULD BE TIME TO COORDINATE ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES AND ESTABLISH A PERMANENT ORGANIZATION.

2. HE DISCLAIMED ANY ATTEMPT TO EXERCISE HEGEMONY OVER LATIN AMERICA. THE EFFORT HE ADVOCATED WOULD BE TO PREPARE LATIN AMERICA FOR ITS FUTURE AS A UNITED CONTINENT, ORGANIZED AND READY TO DEFEND ITSELF AGAINST ANY FUTURE DANGER.

3. PERON AND OTHER GOVERNMENT SPOKESMEN HAVE PREVIOUSLY MADE REMARKS INDICATING THAT LATIN AMERICAN ECONOMIC INTEGRATION WAS ONE OF THE FOREIGN POLICY AIMS OF THE PERON ADMINISTRATION HOWEVER, IN ALL SUCH REMARKS PERON AND OTHER OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN CAREFUL NOT TO PIN THEMSELVES DOWN TO TRYING TO ACCOMPLISH THIS THROUGH LAFTA, THROUGH ASSOCIATION WITH THE ANDEAN GROUP, OR THROUGH ANY OTHER EXISTING MECHANISM.

4. LIKE MANY OF PERON'S STATEMENTS ON ECONOMIC MATTERS, THIS ONE RAISES MANY DOUBTS AND LEAVES MANY QUESTIONS UNANSWERED. DESPITE ITS OBSCURITY, HOWEVER IT IS THE clearest STATEMENT YET MADE OF PERON'S POLICY IN THE FIELD OF LATIN AMERICAN INTEGRATION. IT CLEARLY INDICATES THAT ARGENTINA'S LINE IN PROMOTING ITS VERSION OF LATIN AMERICAN INTEGRATION WILL NOT NECESSARILY BE TO STRENGTHEN LAFTA, ALTHOUGH THIS IS NOT EXCLUDED AND COULD BECOME A MAJOR FACET OF ARGENTINE POLICY. INITIALLY, HOWEVER, IT WILL PROBABLY BE MODELED AFTER ARGENTINE-CHILEAN TRADE RELATIONS WHICH HAVE DEVELOPED PARTIALLY INSIDE AND PARTIALLY OUTSIDE OF THE LAFTA FRAMEWORK. FOR EXAMPLE, ARGENTINA AND CHILE HAVE AN AUTOMOTIVE PARTS COMPLEMENTATION AGREEMENT WHICH HAS BEEN FUNCTIONING REASONABLY WELL OUTSIDE OF LAFTA. THEY ARE ALSO PARTNERS IN SOME COMPLEMENTATION AGREEMENTS WITHIN LAFTA. A FURTHER EXAMPLE, IMPLIED IN PERON'S STATEMENT, MAY BE DRAWN FROM CONVERSATIONS NOW IN PROGRESS BETWEEN ARGENTINA AND URUGUAY WHICH MAY RESULT IN A BROAD ECONOMIC COOPERATION AGREEMENT (PRESIDENT PERON COMMENTED SPECIFICALLY ON THIS IN ANSWER TO ANOTHER QUESTION AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE). AS USUAL, PERON IS LEAVING HIMSELF THE WIDEST POSSIBLE OPTIONS AS TO HOW TO ACHIEVE HIS OBJECTIVE: GREATER ARGENTINE TRADE AND GENERAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH LATIN AMERICA, LEADING TO GREATER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ARGENTINE INFLUENCE. WE HAVE RECENTLY BEEN HOLDING A SERIES OF CONVERSATIONS WITH ARGENTINE OFFICIALS WHO HAVE A VOICE IN MAKING POLICY CONCERNING ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH OTHER LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES (ESPECIALLY ECONOMIC INTEGRATION), AND WILL REPORT THE RESULTS OF THESE CONVERSATIONS BY AIRGRAM DECON 1/3/75.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ECONOMIC COOPERATION, ECONOMIC INTEGRATION, PRESS CONFERENCES, TRADE ORGANIZATIONS, TRADE PROMOTION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 JAN 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974BUENOS00063
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: n/a
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: BUENOS AIRES
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740169/aaaagynd.tel
Line Count: 120
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 JUN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <13 JUN 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <13 JUN 2002 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> srp 971022; srp 971022
Subject: PERON STATEMENT ON LATIN AMERICAN INTEGRATION AND TRADE
TAGS: ETRD, AR, XM, LAFTA
To: STATE INFO BRASILIA
GENEVA
LIMA
MONTEVIDEO
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005